

CLAIMS

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1. (Previously Amended) A method of prioritizing calls connected to an automated telephone system comprising the steps of:

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 connecting a plurality of calls to said automated telephone system;

 obtaining caller identifying information from each of said connected calls;

 placing each *or* ^{of} said connected calls on hold;

 searching a customer database and identifying a customer database record corresponding to the caller identifying information for each connected call;

 retrieving information from said identified customer database records that is relevant to call prioritization;

 creating a call record for each connected call, each call record including said caller identifying information and said retrieved call prioritizing information;

 inserting each created call record into a hold queue;

and

 directing a connected call to an available agent based on said call priority data; and

wherein said step of directing a connected call to direct to an available agent comprises displaying a list of call records stored in said hold queue, including said caller identifying information and said call priority data for each said connected call on at least one available agent display and manually selecting a connected call to direct to said available agent.

2. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each said connected call comprises an incoming telephone call placed by an interested caller to said automated telephone system.

3. (Cancelled) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent comprises displaying a list of call records stored in said hold queue, including said caller identifying information and said call prioritizing information for each said connected call on at least one available agent display and manually selecting a connected call to direct to said available agent.

4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

1. said step of selecting a connected call to direct to an available
agent comprises;

F. comparing the retrieved call prioritizing information
stored in each call record with at least one predetermined
prioritization attribute;

D. arranging the call records in the hold queue according
to the prioritizing information comparison; and

automatically directing a connected call that enjoys a
highest priority position in said hold queue arrangement to an
available agent.

5. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein
said step of obtaining caller identifying information comprises
using an automatic number identification (ANI) system to obtain a
telephone number from which the connected call is placed.

6. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein
said step of obtaining caller identifying information comprises
using an integrated voice response (IVR) system to obtain said
caller identifying information directly from a connected caller.

7. (Previously Amended) A hold queue prioritizing system comprising:

an automated telephone system;

a call receiver/director for connecting a plurality of calls to said automated telephone system;

a customer database including a plurality of database records, each database record including caller identifying information and information relevant to call prioritization;

a means for obtaining identifying information from each of said plurality of calls connected to said automated telephone system;

at least one hold queue coupled to said call receiver/director, said at least one hold queue for holding call records related to said plurality of connected calls;

a plurality of call center agent terminals coupled to said automated telephone system for handling said connected calls; and

a hold queue prioritizer responsive to said caller identifying information from each of said plurality of calls connected to said automated telephone system, for retrieving at least a portion of said call prioritizing information stored in

each said database record corresponding to each connected call and for selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent responsive to said at least a portion of said call prioritizing information;

wherein said hold queue prioritizer comprises a hold queue call record display, displayed on at least one of said plurality of agent terminals, said call record display including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information for each call record in said hold queue and a means for manually directing a call to an available agent based on said displayed connected call information.

8. (Cancelled) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said hold queue prioritizer comprises a hold queue call record display, displayed on at least one of said plurality of agent terminals, said call record display including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information for each call record in said hold queue and a means for manually directing a call to an available agent based on said displayed connected call information.

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9. (Previously Amended) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said displayed call prioritizing information comprises raw customer information retrieved from each said customer database record.

10. (Previously Amended) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said displayed prioritizing information comprises a call priority score derived by said hold queue prioritizer responsive to said call prioritizing information retrieved from each said customer database record.

11. (Original) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said displayed call priority score is an absolute call priority score.

12. (Original) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said displayed call priority score is a relative call priority score.

13. (Original) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said means for obtaining caller identifying

In re: Gene W. Lee
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Page 8

information comprises an automatic number identification (ANI) system.

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14. (Original) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said means for obtaining caller identifying information comprises an integrated voice response (IVR) system.

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15. (Previously Amended) A system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system comprising:

a call receiver/director for receiving a plurality of calls connected to said automated telephone system and for directing said plurality of connected calls to a plurality of agent terminals coupled to said call receiver/director;

a customer database, including customer database records including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information;

a hold queue prioritizer, coupled to said call receiver/director, said hold queue prioritizer including:

a means for obtaining caller identifying information from each of said plurality of connected calls;

a means responsive to said obtained caller identifying information, for searching said customer database to identifying customer database records

corresponding to said obtained caller identifying information for each of said plurality of connected calls, and retrieving said call prioritizing information from each of said identified customer database records;

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a means for creating a call record for each of said plurality of connected calls, each call record including said caller identifying information and said call prioritizing information;

at least one hold queue, coupled to said call hold queue prioritizer for storing said created call records; and

a means for selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent based on said call prioritizing information;

wherein said means for selecting a call to direct to an available agent comprises an on hold call record display for displaying said plurality of call records stored in said hold queue, said displayed call records including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information and a means for allowing an available agent to manually select a connected call to direct to said available agent based on said displayed call prioritizing information.

16. (Cancelled) The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said means for selecting a call to direct to an available agent comprises an on hold call record display for

displaying said plurality of call records stored in said hold queue, said displayed call records including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information and a means for allowing an available agent to manually select a connected call to direct to said available agent based on said displayed call prioritizing information.

17. (Original) The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said means for selecting a call to direct to an available agent comprises a means for automatically directing a connected call to an available agent based on the call prioritizing information stored in said plurality of call records in said hold queue.

18. (Original) The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said call prioritizing information corresponding to each said connected call comprises raw information retrieved from each said customer database record.

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19. (Original) The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said call prioritizing information corresponding to each said connected call comprises a call priority score derived by said hold queue prioritizer responsive to said retrieved call prioritizing information for each said connected call.